

CHICAGO HEIGHTS TERMINAL TRANSFER R. R. Co.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT.

G. M. WEST,
SUPERINTENDENT.

CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILL., Feb'y 16th, 1903

Mr B. P. Jones,

Valdosta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

On Feb'y 6th, I wrote Mr J. R. Saunders, stating that I had been informed at Saint Andrews, that you were contemplating the building of more or less railroad in the Saint Andrews Bay country, and as I have been waiting years for the time to come when such a project could be successfully carried out, and believing that suhh time has now arrived, I wished Mr Saunders to give me your address, which he has done under date of the 12th; also stating that he would see you soon on the same subject.

I have been interested in the Saint Andrews Bay country for the past 15 years; have wathhed carefully the developaent of the country; and West Florida; and not until the past year have I felt that the times and conditions were propitious for the building of a road there, but with the rapid working southward of the pine industry; now crowding hard in to Southern Alabama and West Flroda; with the Naval Stores business with which you are undoubtedly more familliar than I; and the miscellaneous business; all of which is increasing fast; together with the prospect of a heavy increase in business at Gulf ports through the inception of the Isthmus canal; there is no section of the United States that offers as profitable a field for a small investment in a railway way as the now unoccupied territory between the L. & N., and the Gulf; and the Choctowhatchee and Apalachicola rivers. It is a money maker, and would pay from the start.

I have been over this territory many times; have had two as good engineers look it over with me as there is in the country, and know what can be done

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know what can be done there; and with a life long experience in constructing and operating railways; having been 28 years with the Chicago & North western system; I know I can make a road there that will pay from the beginning. I have had much experience with roads built for the purpose of handling forest products; and the economical placing of mill and dock tracks.

I wish to explain to you more fully my position at present as regards this project, and ask that you treat the same confidentially, until such time, which will not be long, as the parties with whom I am in touch either close their deal, or quit it. Last December I was called upon by the promoters of the Florida Gulf Railway, to furnish them expert opinion, and estimates, of the West Florida and pay country, and their projected road. This as you know is a land grant road, and if carried out would give me a position which I wished of Manager, and an one eight interest in the grant, stock &c., after the same had paid for the construction. This project is now being hard pushed, but still lacks some required capital. The parties offer as an inducement for the furnishing of capital, about 3 to 4,000 acres of land per mile; a one third interest in the stock and bonds of the road; and a lien on all the land, road, bonds, and stocks, as security for the money. They may raise it; if they do then I thought that such lines as you wished to build might be worked in along these lines, unless you are intending to take the matter up alone. If they do not build, there are others talking of doing so, but I am not acquainted with them or their projects, and thought I would take the matter up with you, as I understand you have property interests that will be subserved by the building of this road.

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A standard road in all respects could be built in that country at to days prices for steel &c for from 7 to 8 thousand dollars per mile, and logging roads with 45 pound iron at much less. But the main line should be such a standrad road as would accomodate all kinds of equip-ment that would be furnished for traffic by other lines. I can get here at the Hicks Locomotive and Car Works, good engines for that purpose in good condition, at 3.500 each. Flats thoroughly overhauled and in good condition at 210.00 each. Coaches from 1.500 to 21000 each. The road could be equipped well cheaply.

In laying out the line I had in view for the Gulf people a main line running from Apalachicola by St Joseph, to Dothan, where it would have a north east trunk line connection, and also a northwest connection, making it the terminus of all the traffic which might come from the north east or northwest, by as short a line as there is at present

I touch at St Joseph as that is a port that may be of value in the future and it costs nothing to take it in, as the line has to bear to the north & west from Apalachicola, to avoid the heavy swamps. Then it would be well to keep it somewhere about on the line between 11 and 12 running northerly with a chance to spur in to Wewahitchke, or in either direction for a few miles wherever the trade warranted. From saint Andrews I proposed a line starting somewhere between Saint Andrews and Millville, on the Bay shore, and running parallel with the shore until Millville was passed, taking in the mil at garrison, and at Millville, and perhaps with a terminus at Bunkers cove, and then on in a northeasterly direction until a Junntion was formed with the main north and south line. This would give a short line from Saint Andrews; would escape any expensive bridging,

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or heavy grades; and make a very economical line; reaching large bodies of timber which must be railroaded in to the Bay. I would keep away from the Bay far enough to secure the business which could not be profitably run down the streams; but a railway can and will do away with the water traffic; as I have hauled logs 150 miles in to Menominee, Mich., from the pineries on the river which runs through there; and done it at a profit as against what they could run them down the streams for. And we would soon have all the business now being done on the Apalachicola river, as a railway paralleling a river has and always will take the freight.

There are now a few companies owning the most of the land in the region which this road would go through, and I believe that some of them at least would be willing to join in this enterprise. The Yockey Lumber Co.; The German American Co; The Brewer Lumber Co., of Saginaw, Mich.; and the late purchases of the Fulton Land Co., of Amsterdam, N. Y.; cover a large amount of this timber. With a start made I feel that we could bond the road for enough to keep building, and thus be enabled to make of it a profitable through line. It would at once bring the Bay country to the front, and we would have hotels, residences, and business there for every one. It would bring at once an Ice and Refrigerating business; small mill enterprises of various kinds; naval stores business where it is not now profitable; &c. I find that they are now hauling naval stores to the L. & N. at Chipley, from 15 miles south of there, which would be along the line of this road.

My object of course is that I may get an opportunity to construct and manage the road, and live at my home at or near the Bay. I would go there at the same wages I am receiving here; could organize and carry on

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a Construction Company in a way that we would not pay out to contractors 30 per cent profit, but could keep that in our own hands; and save to any one entering in to the project, all that there was to be saved.

I am acquainted with Mr J. M. Egan, President of the Central of Georgia, whose line runs through Dothan, and think if it became advisable could make profitable contracts with him in way of business. I would refer as to my ability and character to Mr Frank H. Lathrop, 2015 First Ave., Birmingham, Alabama, a member of the lumber firm of Lathrop- Hatten Co., and I believe one of the Vice Presidents of the Southern Lumbermens Association. Also to the First National bank of this city; Mr W. J. Jackson, General Superintendent of the C. & E. I. R. R. at Chicago, or others whom I can name if you desire.

What I fear is that others will get in and reap the reward of the work that I have done in exploiting this country, and patiently waiting its development, and I wish to enjoy a share of such benefits myself. I should be pleased to hear from you on the subject at your convenience. If this organization I have spoken of does not materialize I want to join in one that will. I have had a scheme in mind, based on the building of a portion of road for the C. & N. W. some years ago, which I think could be worked there. That is to have the State as Michigan done, grant or pay rather ten thousand acres per mile of land to a road which we would get chartered, which sum would be in payment of the ditching of swamp lands, by the railroad company, through which they passed through. It only takes a very little more than the ordinary road ditching to clear up a good deal of waste land, and would net us a good big sum.

I understand the State cannot grant more lands to roads, but they can and do contract for drainage. Why not get such a charter?

Very truly yours